

# The History of the Bible:

## Part 2

Translations from the AV 1611 to the Modern  
Versions After 1881



# Recapping The History of the Bible: Part 1

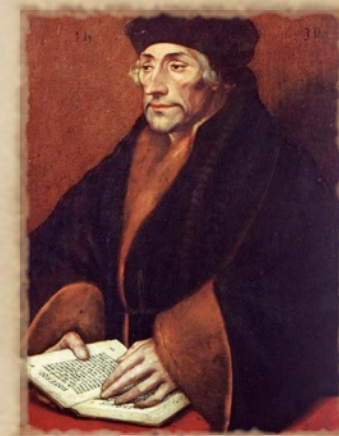
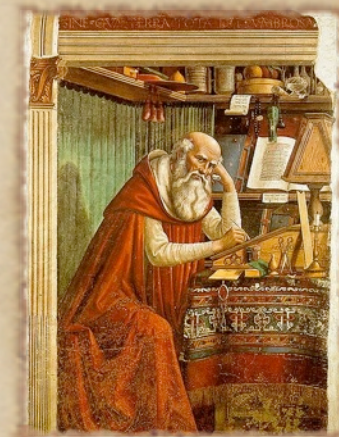


- ◆ The Old Testament consists of the Masoretic Hebrew manuscripts, as well as the Dead Sea Scrolls.
- ◆ The New Testament manuscripts are grouped by families roughly corresponding to geographic regions: Alexandrian (the oldest), Byzantine (the most copies), and sometimes Caesarean or Western (not always recognized as a distinct group).
- ◆ Over 5700 copies of the NT mss. are currently extant.



# Milestone Translations

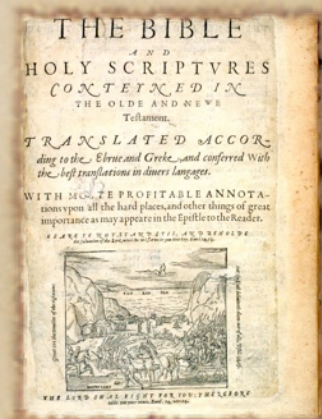
- ◆ The Septuagint, or LXX (Translation of the “Seventy”), a Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh), used by Our Lord Jesus and the Apostles; the most popular translation of their day (completed approx. 132 B.C). The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls revealed a close match to the text of the Hebrew Masoretic was more ancient than the LXX.
- ◆ St. Jerome (c. 347-420 A.D.), translator of the Latin Vulgate, the first Latin translation to synthesize a number of Latin versions and update the text from the original languages. Until Jerome there was no single authoritative translation of the Scriptures for the Latin church. Jerome faced much opposition from contemporaries for “updating” the Bible in his day.
- ◆ Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536), the great classical scholar and Christian humanist, produced a monumental revision of Jerome’s Latin Vulgate that was controversial in his day, as well as a Greek New Testament that came to be known as the Textus Receptus (1516). His Greek New Testament went through 5 revisions produced in subsequent editions. Erasmus worked with a very limited number of manuscripts (approx. 10-15), including only 1 copy of Revelation.





# Milestone Translations (Closer To the AV 1611)

- ◆ Luther's Bible (1534): Using the 2nd Edition of Erasmus' Greek Testament (1519), Luther translated the New Testament by 1522, and the Old Testament by 1534. Luther would make forays into the local towns and markets to listen to people speaking in the streets to ensure that his translation was as close as possible to contemporary language usage.
- ◆ William Tyndale (1494-1536), the great English reformer, was heavily influenced by the works of Erasmus and Luther, and was the first to translate the Scriptures into English from the original Hebrew and Greek languages (sections appeared from 1525 onward). He lived as an outlaw and was eventually martyred for his labour in bringing the Word of God to the people in their contemporary language.
- ◆ The Geneva Bible (1560): One of the most important English translations, the Bible of Shakespeare, Bunyan, and John Milton, it was the predominantly popular version and one cherished in England by all. The King James Bible didn't supplant it in popularity until the late 1700s. This was the Bible brought to America by the Puritans on the Mayflower. It contained a wealth of marginal notes, both doctrinal and textual in nature.





# The Greek New Testament: Versions After Erasmus



- ◆ Robert (Estienne) Stephanus (1503-1559): An accomplished scholar of both Greek and Hebrew, he produced the next major update on the Textus Receptus. Using Erasmus' work as his template, he produced several editions between 1546 and 1551. As Erasmus before him, he included important annotations and marginal notes to identify his textual decisions and provide alternative readings from other Greek manuscripts.



- ◆ Theodore Beza (1519-1605), building upon the foundation of Erasmus and also largely indebted to the work of Stephanus, Beza produced an edition of the Greek New Testament (1565) along with a version of the Vulgate, with copious notes and commentary included on both. These notes also included important remarks on textual variants, glosses, and marginalia, etc. Beza gained access to few more Greek mss., but this made no significant difference compared to Erasmus' text.
- ◆ Beza made some unique textual decisions called "conjectural emendations" that eventually carried through in what is now properly referred to as the "Textus Receptus". Although Erasmus' work is nearly identical to Beza, it was not until Beza's edition that the Greek text was labeled "Textus Receptus", from the Latin on the title page declaring it to be "The text that has been received by all."



# The Underlying Greek Texts: The Sole Standard To Judge By



- ◆ When comparing Bible translations, it is not as simple as taking any two versions in any language and simply comparing them verse by verse.
- ◆ Because each translation is based on a \*blueprint\*, that is, the specific Greek or Hebrew texts it uses as its basis, the reason for differences can only be found by going to the ROOT of the discussion - the original documents.
- ◆ In fact, no 2 manuscripts in existence are exactly the same - because of this, ALL translations are based on an eclectic text, that is, a text made up of the best readings from the different sources the translators had to choose from.
- ◆ Erasmus, Luther, Tyndale, Beza, and all translators have different textual critical principles they use to decide what they considered to be the \*best\* reading when multiple possibilities existed.
- ◆ The process of analyzing Greek manuscripts and deciding on variant readings is called "Textual Criticism." This does not mean they are "criticizing" the text, but they are being \*critical\* in their decision making process.



# It's All Greek To Me?

- ◆ Comparing the historic versions (i.e. Tyndale, Geneva, Luther Bible, or the KJV, etc.) to any modern versions could be likened to comparing two automobiles which were built from different blueprints.



OR



- ◆ We would not call a Honda a perversion of a Volkswagen, or say that a Volkswagen is a distorted version of a Honda - because they are built with totally different underlying technical specifications.
- ◆ We also would not use loaded terms like “added” or “deleted” to describe their differences, because they were assembled from totally different materials.



# Manuscript Family Resemblances



OR

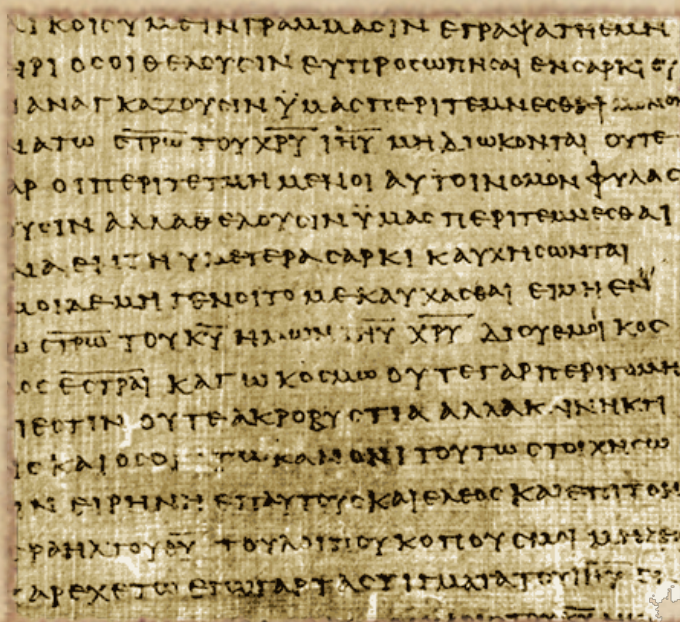


- ◆ There are 400, 000 textual variants across all extant manuscripts.
- ◆ 99% of variants are irrelevant to proper translation and understanding of the Greek text (they are grammatical nuances that are untranslatable into the English language).
- ◆ Meaningful variants account for only 2.9% of the text, which equals 1 meaningful variant every 3 pages. Of these only about 150 touch on verses of any doctrinal substance.
- ◆ The text is 98.33% agreed regardless of which manuscript family is used.
- ◆ Not one article of faith is in doubt which is not abundantly sustained by other undoubted passages.



# The Greek New Testament

From Westcott & Hort (1881) to the Nestle-Aland/UBS 4th



- ◆ Archeological discoveries of many ancient manuscripts predating the ones used in the Textus Receptus led to the formulation of new textual critical principles.
- ◆ Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus (4th century), two complete Bibles in pristine condition, shed much light on the earliest form of the NT text.
- ◆ The theories of Westcott & Hort tended to place too great an emphasis on these great Codices, exalting them to a nearly unrepachable state when determining any correct reading of the NT text.
- ◆ Later critics such as Dean Burgon, Kurt Aland, Bruce Metzger, and others corrected the overzealousness of the Westcott & Hort exaltation of the Codices, formulating a new Greek Text that has become the joint texts of the Nestle-Aland 27th ed., and the United Bible Societies (UBS) 4th ed.
- ◆ The Nestle-Aland 27th ed. and the UBS 4th ed. also incorporate the discoveries of even older manuscripts unearthed in the deserts of Egypt, near Alexandria, in the form of papyri. Some of these date to within less than 30 years from the death of the Apostle John.
- ◆ Overall, all of the newer critical Greek editions of the NT agree amongst one another from between 70-85% (compare the over 1800 differences between the TR and the Majority Text).



# Differences In Translations: Why Do They Exist?

## ◆ 1) Textual Differences:

- ◆ Variety of source texts (manuscripts) - textual criticism.
- ◆ Textual critics weigh variants and differ on some of their selections/textual critical principles.
- ◆ Archeology continues to discover more manuscripts, enriching our resources and confirming the reliability of the transmission of the Old and New Testament.

## ◆ 2) Translational Differences

- ◆ Uncertainty or disagreement concerning the meaning of words in the original languages (Hebrew, Greek, Chaldean, Aramaic).
- ◆ An example from a well-known Bible narrative: in Genesis 37:3.

## ◆ 3) Change Within Target Language

- ◆ All languages change over time, which means some words and phrases fall out of usage completely, while others change their meaning, taking on other connotations.
- ◆ Sometimes words can even become totally reversed from their original meaning and context, such as the usage of “thee” and “thou”, which in Early Modern English were pronouns used only to address someone of equal station or rank, and the formal pronoun “You” was to address a superior. (cf. Shakespeare, “Twelfth Night”).



#### 4) Translation Philosophy

### Formal Equivalence:

(Word for Word)

- ◆ Closer to the original languages
- ◆ Essentially literal in its approach
- ◆ Retains important theological terminology
- ◆ Transliterates idioms into target language
- ◆ Preserves literary effects from the original
- ◆ More formal or traditional language used
- ◆ Requires a higher literacy level for comprehension and study
- ◆ More suited to serious linguistic study

### Dynamic Equivalence:

(Thought for Thought)

- ◆ Slightly more interpretative of source words
- ◆ More colloquial sounding and less literal
- ◆ Often shortens sentences and loses some of the rich syntax of the original
- ◆ Replaces idioms with modern target language's native idioms (i.e. "God forbid")
- ◆ More chance of the insertion of bias
- ◆ Easier for non native target language speakers, youth, or children due to smoother flowing style
- ◆ Less appropriate for serious study



Psalms 90:17	<b>Fidelity to the words of the original</b>	<b>Feeling free to substitute something in place of those words</b>
	"Establish the work of our hands upon us." <i>(What the verse actually says.)</i>	"Give us success in what we do"; or "Let all go well for us."
Psalms 23:5	<b>Limiting the process of translation to translating the words of the original</b>	<b>Adding explanatory commentary beyond what the original authors wrote</b>
	"You anoint my head with oil, my cup overflows."	" <i>You honor me</i> by anointing my head with oil. My cup overflows <i>with blessings</i> ." <i>(Italics show what the translators have added to the biblical text.)</i>
Luke 22:42	<b>Retaining the concrete vocabulary of the original</b>	<b>Replacing the concretion with an abstraction</b>
	"Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me."	"Father, if it can be done, take away what must happen to Me."
Col. 3:9	<b>Retaining a figure of speech in the original</b>	<b>Removing a figure of speech</b>
	"Seeing you have put off the old self . . . and put on the new self." <i>(Garment metaphor retained.)</i>	"You have left your old sinful life . . . and begun to live the new life." <i>(Garment metaphor removed.)</i>
2 Thess. 3:5	<b>Passing on to the reader the ambiguity/multiple meanings of the original</b>	<b>Resolving the ambiguity/multiplicity in a single direction</b>
	"The love of God . . ." <i>(Can be both the believer's love for God and God's love for the believer.)</i>	"God's love . . ." <i>(The double meanings reduced to one.)</i>
Eccles. 3:11-12	<b>Producing a relatively high level of vocabulary and syntax</b>	<b>Producing a simplified level of vocabulary and syntax</b>
	"He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end."	"God makes everything happen at the right time. Yet none of us can ever fully understand all he has done, and he puts questions in our minds about the past and the future."
Eccles. 11:9	<b>Producing an English Bible that possesses a dignified and relatively formal style</b>	<b>Producing a colloquial Bible</b>
	"Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth. Walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes."	"Young people, it's wonderful to be young! Enjoy every minute of it. Do everything you want to do; take it all in."
1 Tim. 2:6	<b>Retaining traditional theological vocabulary</b>	<b>Avoiding traditional theological vocabulary</b>
	"Who gave himself as a ransom for all."	"He gave his life to set all men free."

◆ A comparison chart illustrating some of the differences that can occur through the different translation philosophies (ESV/NLT)

- From "Understanding English Bible Translation" by Leland Ryken, adapted from the chart on pg. 33

◆ Note that ALL Bible translations do inevitably use a mixture of both translation philosophies, but all fall within the spectrum of literal/thought-for-thought to varying degrees.



# Comparing Translations

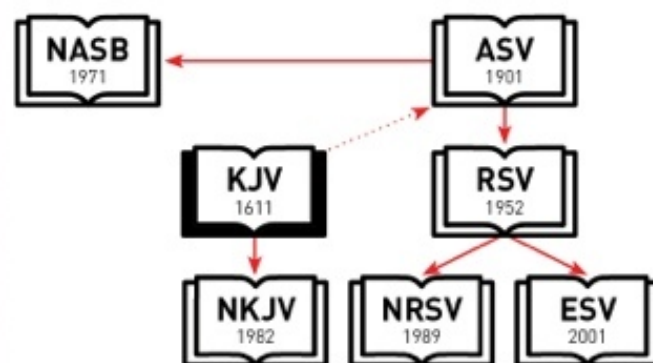
## Evaluating the Translation Philosophy Spectrum

### COMPARISON OF ENGLISH BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

By Mark Barry © 2010 AFES [www.afes.org.au](http://www.afes.org.au) [Adapted from *How to Choose a Translation for All Its Worth* by Gordon D. Fee & Mark L. Strauss] Please do not republish without permission, but feel free to copy for personal use.

#### FORMAL EQUIVALENCE WORD FOR WORD

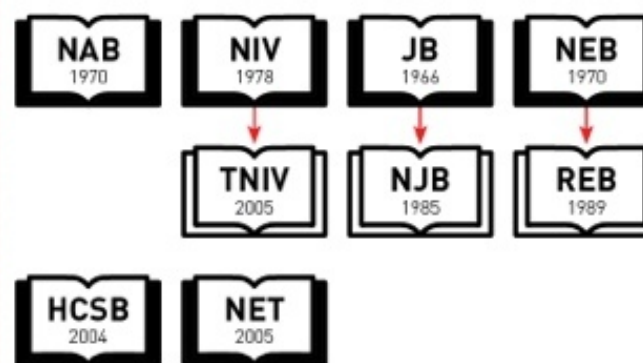
- **theory:** 'literal' or *word-for-word*
- **aim:** to retain the *form*, i.e. the words and structure, of the original text as much as possible
- **result:** an English translation that is primarily accurate, yet also comprehensible



ASV	= American Standard Version
ESV	= English Standard Version
KJV	= King James Version
NASB	= New American Standard Bible
NKJV	= New King James Version
NRSV	= New Revised Standard Version
RSV	= Revised Standard Version

#### INTERMEDIATE

- **theory:** mediating between 'literal' and 'idiomatic'
- **aim:** to retain the *form* of the original text where possible, without compromising its *function*, i.e. to convey meaning
- **result:** an English translation that is both accurate and clear.

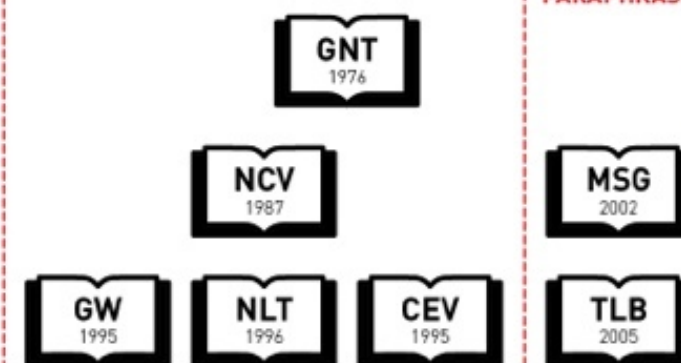


HCSB	= Holman Christian Standard Bible
JB	= Jerusalem Bible (Roman Catholic)
NAB	= New American Bible (Roman Catholic)
NEB	= New English Bible
NET	= New English Translation (online translation)
NIV	= New International Version
NJB	= New Jerusalem Bible (Roman Catholic)
TNIV	= Today's New International Version
REB	= Revised English Bible

#### FUNCTIONAL EQUIVALENCE MEANING FOR MEANING

- **theory:** 'idiomatic' or *meaning-for-meaning*
- **aim:** to retain the *function* of the original text, i.e. to convey meaning, as much as possible
- **result:** to produce an English translation that is primarily natural and easy to understand

**Paraphrase** = re-wording a text in the *same* language, rather than translating it from one language to *another*.

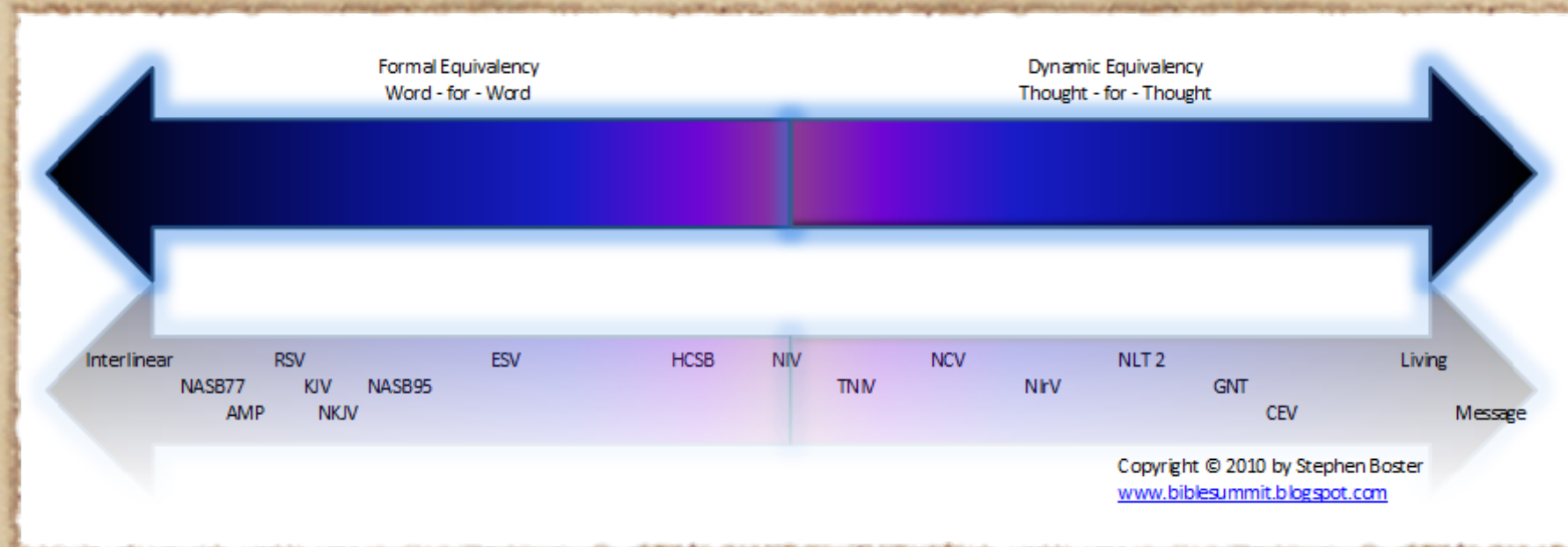


CEV	= Contemporary English Version
GNT	= Good News Translation (Good News Bible)
GW	= God's Word
MSG	= The Message
NCV	= New Century Version
NLT	= New Living Translation
TLB	= The Living Bible

#### PARAPHRASE



## Some Examples of Formal vs. Dynamic Equivalence

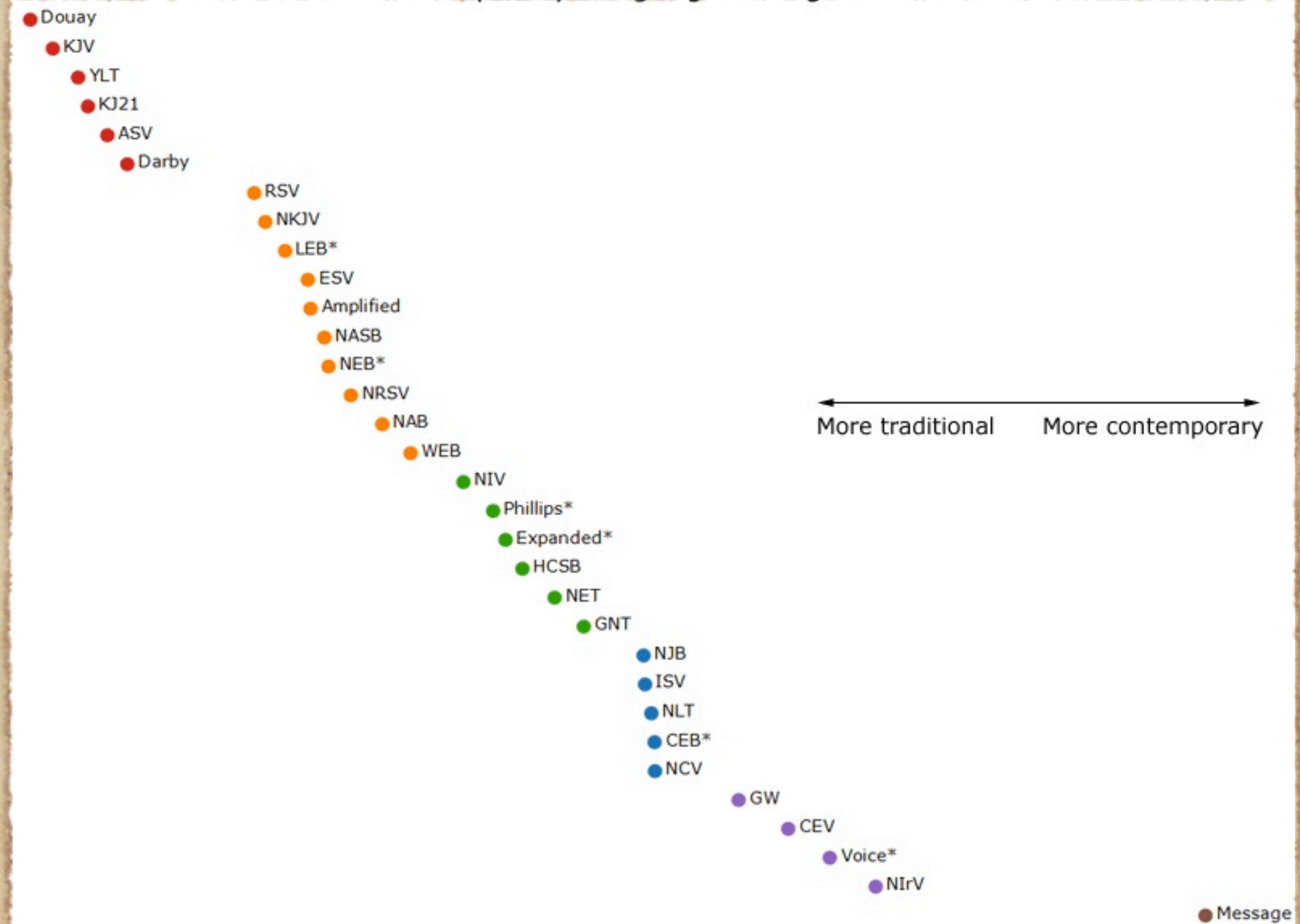


- ◆ Acts 2:47, 1 Cor 1:18, 2 Cor 2:15, 2 Cor 4:3, Eph 4:22 (present participle in Greek, “should” vs. “being”)
- ◆ Rom 3:4, 6, 31, 6:2, 15, 7:7, &c. (colloquial expression “God forbid” used, Gk. theos not in mss.)
- ◆ 1 Cor 13:8-1 (Greek literally uses “done away” 4 times, compare NASB vs. KJV, NKJV)
- ◆ Gen 18:19 (Hebrew “known” - KJV, NKJV vs. NIV, RSV “chosen”; NASB and ESV give textual footnote)
- ◆ Rom 1:3 (Lit. “seed” - KJV, NKJV, ASV - or “descendant” - NIV, RSV; ESV, NASB add note with \*)
- ◆ 2 Cor 11:29 (ASV, NKJV, NIV more literal on “sin - to stumble”, KJV “offend”, NASB more paraphrastic)
- ◆ 1 Pet 1:13 (KJV, NKJV, ASV, RSV = “gird up”, NIV, NLT = “prepare”, ESV, NASB “prepare” with \*footnote)
- ◆ Rev 20:13-14 (KJV has uniform rendering of three distinct words, Sheol, Hades, and Gehenna, as “hell”)



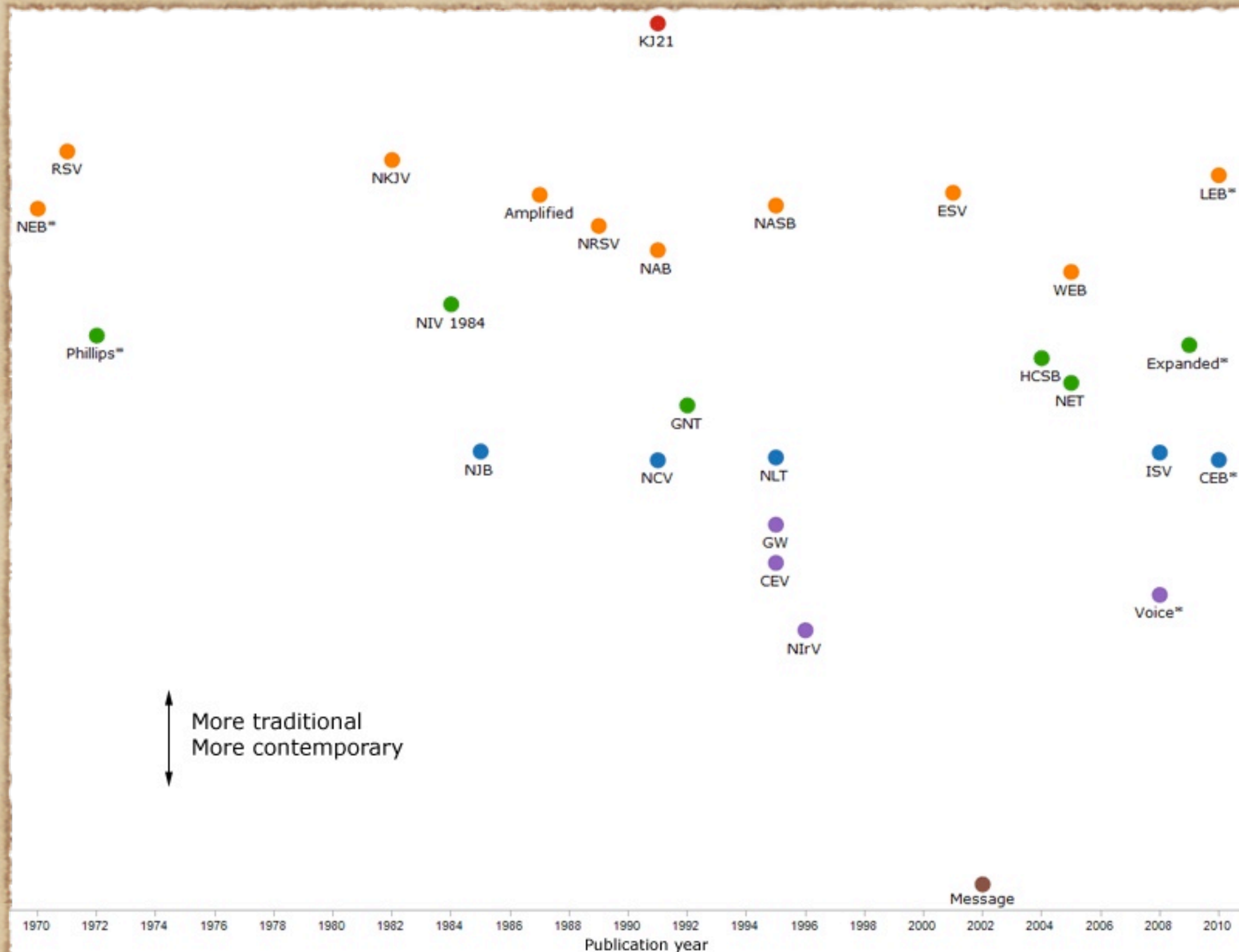
# Language Style

## Traditional vs. Contemporary



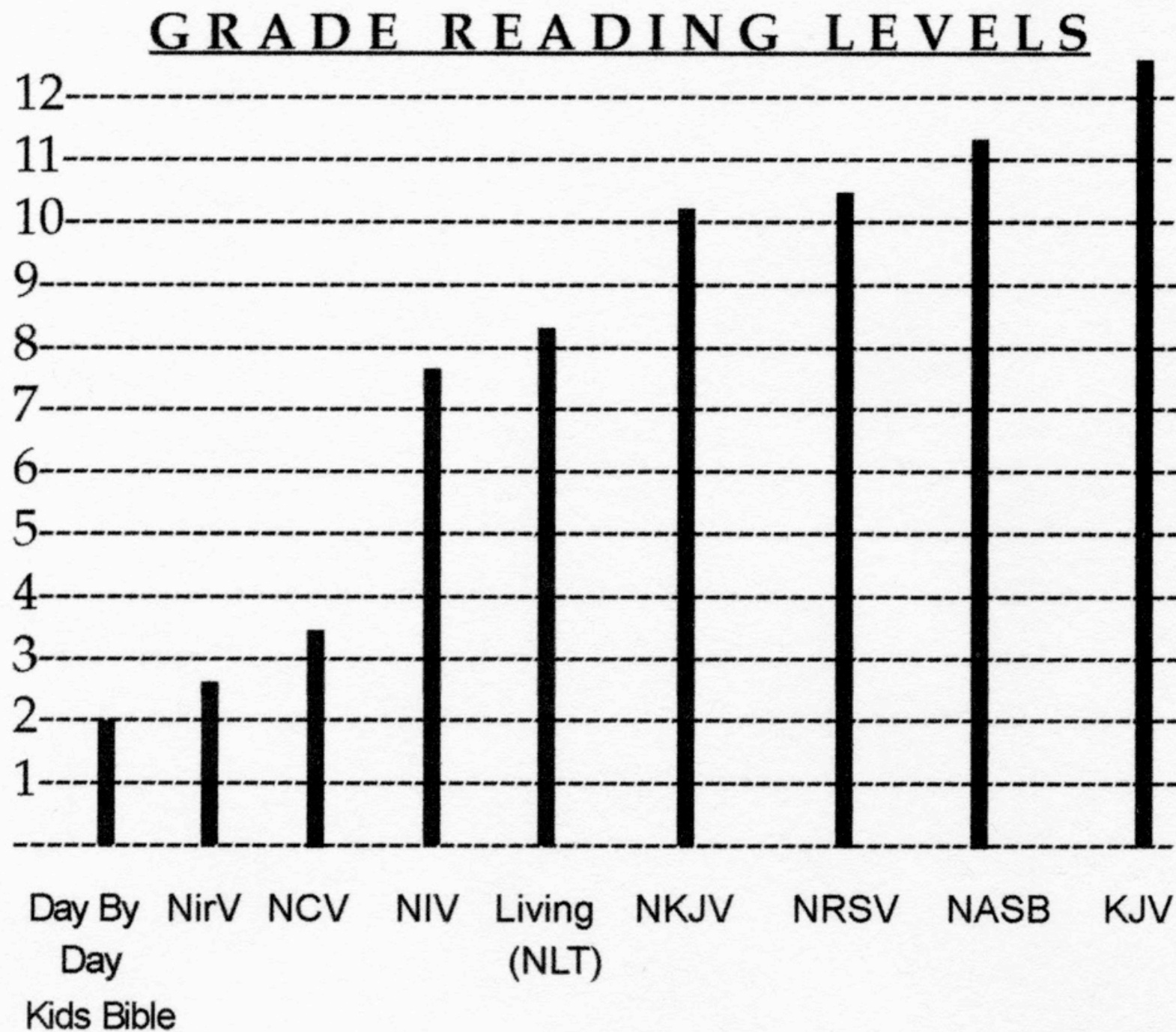


# Relative Traditional vs. Contemporary Language





# Comparing Literacy Requirements

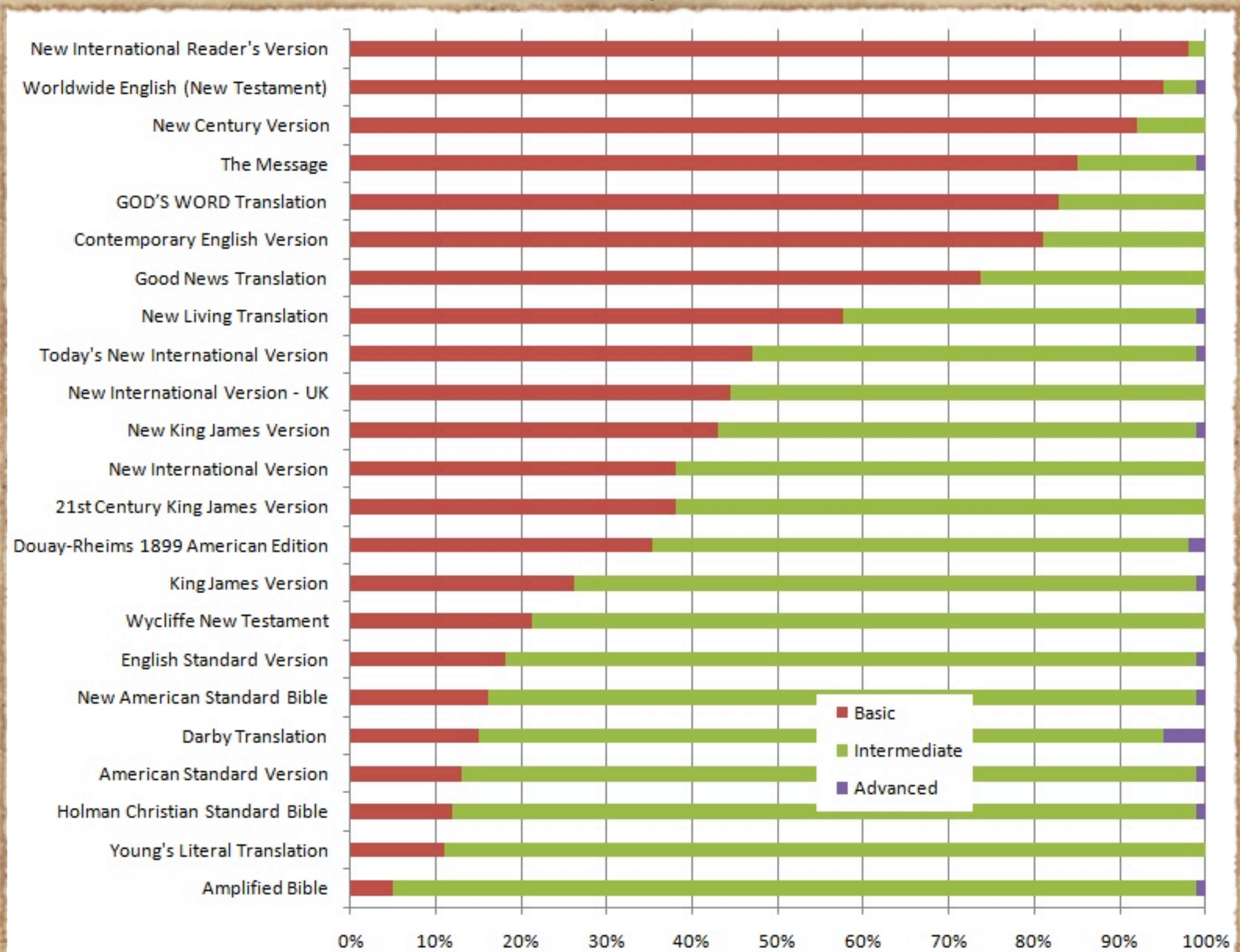


All About Bibles  
Oxford Univ. Press



# Reading Grade Levels

(from Biblegateway.com)





# BIBLE TRANSLATION CHART

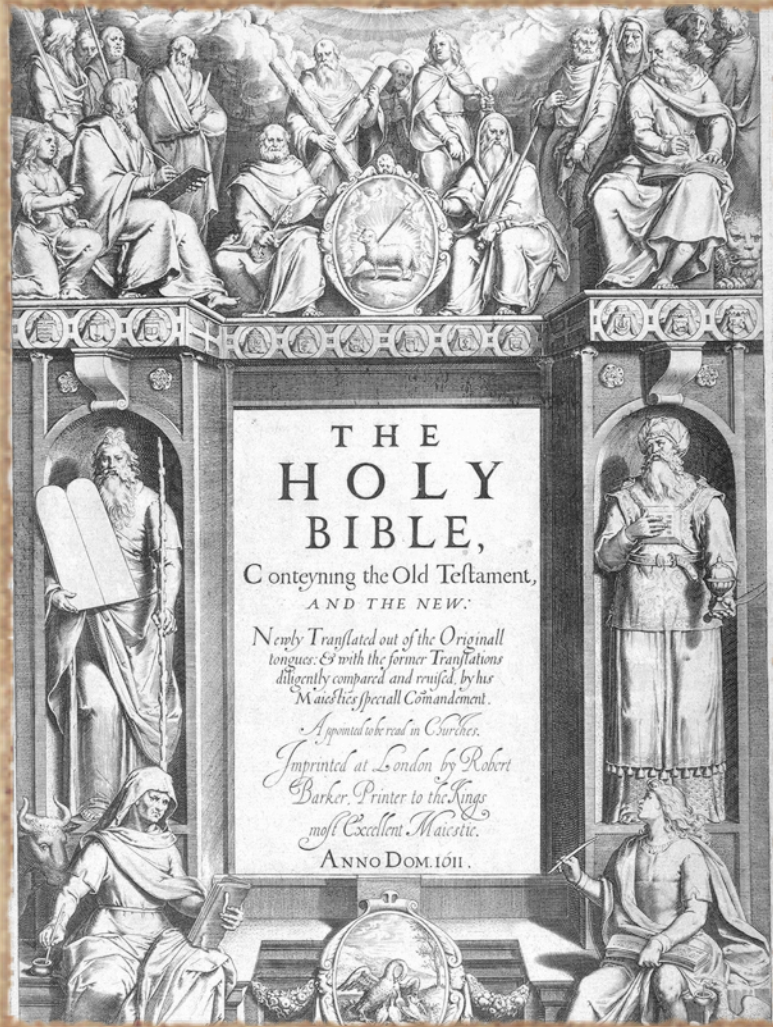
Translation	Grade Reading Level	Readability	Market Share Percentage*	Number of Translators	Translation Philosophy	Distinctives	Passage Comparison 2 Corinthians 10:13
<b>NIV</b> New International Version	7.8	A highly accurate and smooth-reading version in modern English	42.62%	115	Balance between word-for-word and thought-for-thought	The best-selling translation, widely accepted by evangelical Christians. Purpose in translation was to "produce an accurate translation, suitable for public and private reading, teaching, preaching, memorizing, and liturgical use." Published in 1978. Most Read. Most Trusted.	We, however, will not boast beyond proper limits, but will confine our boasting to the field God has assigned to us, a field that reaches even to you.
<b>KJV</b> King James Version	12.0	Difficult to read due to 17th-century English vocabulary and word order	19.31%	54	Word-for-word	Traditionally loved and accepted by all Christians. Purpose in translation was "to deliver God's book unto God's people in a tongue which they can understand." Published in 1611. Timeless Treasure	But we will not boast of things without our measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you.
<b>NKJV</b> New King James Version	9.0	Easier word usage, but somewhat choppy because it maintains 17th century sentence structure	12.46%	119	Authors used the original KJV as a benchmark, while working to produce an accurate and modern word-for-word translation	A modern language update of the original KJV. Purpose was to update and modernize the original KJV but preserve the KJV as much as possible. Published in 1982.	We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us -- a sphere which especially includes you.
<b>NLT</b> New Living Translation	6.3	A readable translation; uses vocabulary and language structures commonly used by the average person	8.77%	90	Translators were involved in bringing the classic Living Bible from its status as a paraphrase to a thought-for-thought translation of Scripture	The New Living Translation is a dynamic equivalence translation based on the work of 90 Bible scholars and a smaller team of English stylists. These scholars and stylists went back to the original languages and sought to produce the closest natural equivalent of the message in natural, contemporary English. Published in 1996.	But we will not boast of authority we do not have. Our goal is to stay within the boundaries of God's plan for us, and this plan includes our working there with you.
<b>Updated NASB</b> New American Standard Bible	11.0	Formal style, but more readable than the King James Version.	4.75%	54	Word-for-word	A highly respected, formal translation of the Bible. Purpose of the work was to update the American Standard Version into more current English. Published in 1971. Updated in 1995. The most literal is now more readable.	But we will not boast beyond our measure, but within the measure of the sphere which God apportioned to us as a measure, to reach even as far as you.
<b>NIRV</b> New International Reader's Version	2.9	Very easy to read and understand; uses simple, short words and sentences	2.18%	11	Balance between word-for-word translation and thought-for-thought, with an emphasis on meaning when necessary for simplification	A thorough, scholarly simplification of the NIV, the NIRV was specifically designed to help young children and new readers understand the Bible for themselves and create an easy stepping-stone from a children's Bible to an adult Bible. The NIV for kids. Published in 1994. Updated in 1998.	But I won't brag more than I should. Instead, I will brag only about what I have done in the area God has given me. It is an area that reaches all the way to you.
<b>Message, The</b> (New Testament and OT Wisdom books)	4.8	An easy-to-read, modern-language paraphrase	1.75%	Eugene H. Peterson	Thought-for-thought. Converts the original languages into the tone and rhythms of modern-day American speech while retaining the idioms and meaning of the original languages	This paraphrase was translated using the rhythms and tone of contemporary English to communicate to the modern reader. Published in 1993.	We're not, understand, putting ourselves in a league with those who boast that they're our superiors. We wouldn't dare do that. But in all this comparing and grading and competing, they quite miss the point. We aren't making outrageous claims here. We're sticking to the limits of what God has set for us. But there can be no question that those limits reach to and include you.



<b>Amplified</b>	N/A	Expanded and "amplified" by means of a system of brackets and parentheses, which sometimes make for fragmented reading	1.75%	Frances E. Siewert, plus 12 others	Word-for-word plus additional amplification of word meanings	A popular translation used to understand the hidden meaning of Greek and Hebrew words. Published in 1964 (updated in 1987). Break through the language barrier.	We, on the other hand, will not boast beyond our legitimate province and proper limit, but will keep within the limits [of our commission which] God has allotted us as our measuring line and which reaches and includes even you.
<b>NAB</b> New American Bible	6.6	A clear and straightforward translation that reads smoothly. Written in basic American English	0.70%	55	Word-for-word	Published under the direction of pope Pius XII, this Catholic version of the Bible represents more than 25 years of effort by the Catholic Biblical Association of America. All editions include the Deuterocanonical/Apocryphal books. Published in 1970.	But we will not boast beyond measure but will keep to the limits God has apportioned us, namely, to reach even to you.
<b>NRSV</b> New Revised Standard Version	10.4	Contemporary, dignified with generic language with reference to humans	0.53%	30	Balance between word-for-word and thought-for-thought	A widely accepted translation in the tradition of the King James Version. Purpose was to "make a good one better." Published in 1990. A Bible for all Christians.	We, however, will not boast beyond limits, but will keep within the field that God has assigned to us, to reach out even as far as you.
<b>GNT</b> Good News Translation. Formerly Today's English Version and Good News Bible	6.0	Very simple, readable version without jargon. Uses a limited vocabulary	0.30%	R. Bratcher (NT) Bratcher plus six others (OT)	Thought-for-thought	"A translation intended for people everywhere for whom English is either their mother tongue or an acquired language." Published in 1976. Real. Clear.	As for us, however, our boasting will not go beyond certain limits; it will stay within the limits of the work which God has set for us, and this includes our work among you.
<b>CEV</b> Contemporary English Version	5.4	Clear, simple English that a child can understand, but with a mature style that adults can appreciate	0.13%	Over 100 (including reviewers)	Thought-for-thought	Written at an elementary-school reading level, the CEV is readable and understandable for the modern reader. Published in 1995.	We don't brag about something we don't have a right to brag about. We will only brag about the work that God has sent us to do, and you are part of that work.
<b>TNIV</b> Today's New International Version	N/A	A highly readable, accurate translation written in modern English	N/A	115	Balance between word-for-word and thought-for-thought	Based on the NIV, the most read and most trusted translation. Combines uncompromising accuracy with the clarity of contemporary language. New Testament published in 2001; Old Testament to be published in 2005. The classic translation in today's language.	We, however, will not boast beyond proper limits, but will confine our boasting to the sphere of service God himself has assigned to us, a sphere that also includes you.
<b>NJB</b> New Jerusalem Bible	7.4	Highly literary, inclusive, modern language	0.03%	36	Balance between word translation and meaning	An updated version of the 1966 Jerusalem Bible. The New Jerusalem Bible is the official English language text used in Catholic liturgy outside the United States.	By contrast we do not intend to boast beyond measure, but will measure ourselves by the standard which God laid down for us, namely that of having come all the way to you.
<b>HCSB</b> Holman Christian Standard Bible	N/A	A highly readable, accurate translation written in modern English	N/A	90	Balance between word-for-word and thought-for-thought	A new translation that attempts to combine both formal and dynamic equivalence. New Testament published in 2000.	We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but according to the measure of the area of ministry that God has assigned to us, which reaches even you.
<b>ESV</b> English Standard Version	8	Literal style, but more readable than the King James Version	N/A	100+	Word-for-word	A literal update of the Revised Standard Version, seeks to produce a word-for-word correspondence. Published in 2001.	But we will not boast beyond limits, but will boast only with regard to the area of influence God assigned to us, to reach even you.



# 1611 Authorized Version



- ◆ Built on the foundation laid by Wycliffe, Tyndale, and the Bishop's Bible
- ◆ 17th century Anglican (Church of England) translation commissioned by King James I, in hopes of uniting a church sadly divided by various parties (Conformists & Puritans).
- ◆ 54 of the greatest linguists and scholars of all time worked in companies, creating a beautiful masterpiece of English prose and verse.
- ◆ Became the official "Authorized Version" of the crown and was ordained to be read and approved in all churches.
- ◆ Based on the Greek Textus Receptus produced by Erasmus and further developed by Stephanus and Beza.
- ◆ Also used other translations and manuscripts, such as the Latin Vulgate, Septuagint, Syriac, and sometimes incorporated readings from those.
- ◆ Translators were given a list of "rules" to follow by James, including restrictions on translating various words differently from their Greek transliteration, i.e. church could not be translated "congregation", and baptism was not to be translated as "immersion".



## Strengths

- ♦ Extremely literal in style, maintains syntax and idioms of original languages closely.
- ♦ Beautiful, poetic, flowing English prose, unmatched in majesty and grandeur.
- ♦ Retains important theological terminology, i.e., propitiation, ransom, justification, sanctification.
- ♦ Thousands of marginal notes added clarification on difficult Greek and Hebrew words, often noting variant readings.
- ♦ Translated in a committee format, companies of scholars comparing each other's work, which helps reduce possible theological bias.
- ♦ Was accessible to contemporary readers in the vernacular language of Jacobean England, known as "Early Modern English".
- ♦ Dignified and reverent language which lends itself to powerful preaching.

## AV 1611

(KJV)



## Weaknesses

- ♦ Due to the changes in the English language, many words have become archaic and no longer mean what they once did (i.e., conversation, let, wit, etc.).
- ♦ A lack of uniformity in translating Hebrew and Greek words with the same corresponding word in English results in loss of clarity (i.e., Angel of the Lord, Hell for "Sheol, Hades, and Gehenna", etc.).
- ♦ Heavy reliance on Jerome's Latin Vulgate (sometimes preferred over the Greek), resulted in some incorrect translations of the Greek tenses, or loss of the definite Greek article (i.e. "the" replaced by "a, an").
- ♦ Unique readings from the Vulgate have no Greek manuscript backing until very late (13th cent.), which undermines reliability of the NT transmission.
- ♦ Based on the Textus Receptus with a limited number of manuscripts, many older mss. have been found since which carry more weight than the TR.
- ♦ Advancements in the understanding of Greek and Hebrew shows that the KJV mistranslates many words, especially relating to animals, plants, clothing, etc.



# Revised Version 1881

## Strengths

- ◆ Extremely literal in style, maintains syntax and idioms of original languages closely.
- ◆ Closely mirrored language of the KJV, and stood as a revision of the Authorized Version.
- ◆ Retains important theological terminology, i.e., propitiation, ransom, justification, sanctification, etc.
- ◆ Incorporated readings from newly discovered, older Greek mss. "Codex Vaticanus & Sinaiticus".
- ◆ Translated in a committee format, companies of scholars comparing each other's work, which helps reduce possible theological bias.
- ◆ Advancements in the understanding of Greek grammar added to accuracy of translation.



## Weaknesses

- ◆ Due to an extremely literal correspondence to Greek grammar, the English style is hampered and made rather awkward.
- ◆ Relied too heavily on the textual critical principles of Westcott and Hort, whose theories overvalued the use of Vaticanus and Sinaiticus.
- ◆ Principles of classical Greek were enforced too rigorously on Greek which was not classical (Koine Greek).
- ◆ Did not achieve wide acceptance due to difficulty of the language and syntax, and also due to retaining some of the more archaic forms ("thee and thou") which were not spoken any longer in the vernacular.



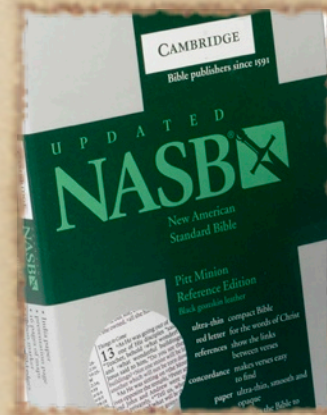


“With regard to the Revised New Testament, in answer to many enquiries we are only able to go thus far. It is a valuable addition to our versions, but it will need much revision before it will be fit for public use. To translate well, the knowledge of two languages is needed: the men of the New Testament company are strong in Greek, but weak in English. Comparing the two, in our judgment the old version is the better.”

- Charles Spurgeon, “Prince of Preachers”



# New American Standard Bible (1971)



## Strengths

- ◆ Very literal update of the ASV (1901), building on the basis of the RV (1881).
- ◆ Greatly improved the flow of the English style while remaining highly accurate.
- ◆ Retains important theological terminology, i.e., propitiation, ransom, justification, sanctification, etc.
- ◆ Based on a greater number of manuscripts and advances in textual criticism through the Nestle-Aland and UBS texts, and gives textual footnotes.
- ◆ Counteracted some of the anti-Christian readings of important OT texts in the liberal RSV of 1952.

## Weaknesses

- ◆ Some inconsistency in rendering idioms from the original languages literally.
- ◆ The English prose, while a great improvement over the RV and ASV, is still somewhat awkward for public reading.
- ◆ Renders some tenses less literally than the original language, but does mark differences with a \* (for example, the “historical present tense”), used throughout the gospels.
- ◆ Sometimes overly repetitive use of the exact same English word to correspond to the same Greek word (although this is normally admirable, it can lead to redundant sounding English style).



# New International Version (1971)



## Strengths

- ◆ Corrected some of the liberal interpretative verses in the RSV, providing a medium between the RSV and the NASB.
- ◆ A blend between literal and thought-for-thought translation philosophy. This is only a strength in the sense of ease of reading, not accuracy.
- ◆ Retains some important theological terminology, i.e., propitiation, ransom, justification, sanctification, etc.
- ◆ Based on a greater number of manuscripts and advances in textual criticism through the Nestle-Aland and UBS texts, and gives textual footnotes.

## Weaknesses

- ◆ Attempts to harmonize different verses in the Bible where apparent "contradictions" have been alleged (i.e., Gen 1 creation account and Gen 2:19, they use "had formed", not a correct rendering of the Hebrew; also Acts 9:7 and 22:9).
- ◆ An ecumenical approach is taken to try to gloss over passages of doctrinal dispute in evangelical Protestantism (i.e., Paul's instructions on headcoverings, for example, are not rendered faithfully according to the Greek in 1 Cor 11).
- ◆ Makes some dramatic departures from traditional Protestant theology in rendering terms such as "Only-begotten" (John 1:14, 18, 3:16, etc) incorrectly as "one and only."
- ◆ Overall not a very literal translation approach



# New King James Version (1982)



## Strengths

- ◆ Maintains much of the beauty and eloquence of the KJV's English style
- ◆ An astounding amount of textual critical notes giving the reader access to thousands of variant readings from the Majority Text, Nestle-Aland, and even the LXX and the Vulgate
- ◆ Essentially very literal translation, making it a very accurate rendering of the Greek and Hebrew texts (usually more literal than the NASB, but comparable to it as well)
- ◆ Updates archaic and outmoded words from the KJV, as well as hundreds of translational errors based on updated knowledge of Greek grammar, horticulture, zoology, etc.

## Weaknesses

- ◆ Based on the Textus Receptus, it retains many readings which have little to no Greek mss. support (although it does notify the reader through the textual footnotes)
- ◆ Higher reading level due to following the KJV in much of its more difficult syntax, it can present challenges depending on the age of the reader
- ◆ Some of the textual footnotes carry "tendentious remarks", as one reviewer puts it: that is, they show a bias toward the translators view of the Textus Receptus (i.e., a note on the Story of the Adulterous in John 7:53-8:11 adds that "over 900 mss. contain this story", but does not say they are all very late mss.)
- ◆ The notes in the Preface are also somewhat misleading, holding to an unproven theory regarding the Byzantine text's priority



# English Standard Version (2001)

## Strengths

- ◆ Essentially literal translation
- ◆ More theologically conservative than the NIV, and more readable than the NASB
- ◆ Retains important theological terminology, i.e., propitiation, ransom, justification, sanctification
- ◆ Based on a greater number of manuscripts and advances in textual criticism through the Nestle-Aland and UBS texts, and gives textual footnotes
- ◆ Stylistically similar to the KJV and the RV, it uses traditional sounding language which is quite beautiful and reverent, while being based on the newer textual principles
- ◆ Retains gender specific language, but gives footnotes for better understanding of Greek and Hebrew terms (i.e. "brethren")



## Weaknesses

- ◆ Minor inconsistencies exist in the English style, due to it being largely an update and revision of the Revised Standard Version, which can make it somewhat awkward at times
- ◆ Some corrections of the RSV are not for the better, and inject undue theological interpretation into the verses (i.e. Gen 3:6, Eve is pictured with Adam "with her")
- ◆ Sometimes fails to indicate departures in the OT from the Masoretic Text, whereas the RSV had more thorough footnotes in this regard
- ◆ Imitates the NIV in some places of important theological note, such as John 8:42 ("I proceeded and came forth from God" is changed to "I came from God and I am here")



# Some Critical Concluding Remarks

## About the NKJV

“In conclusion we will say that the New King James Version is comparable to the NASB in literal accuracy, and sometimes exceeds it. It is equally valuable for detailed study of the Bible. Its English style is superior to the NASB. Its main fault is the use of the *Textus Receptus* instead of a critically edited text, based upon ancient manuscripts; but the marginal notes will compensate for this, if the student makes a habit of consulting the margin. So we can recommend this version for students who do not ignore the margin.”

- Michael Marlowe

## About the ESV

“As modern versions go, the ESV should be counted as one of the best for use in teaching ministry. It is more literal than the NIV, and so it is largely free of the problems that come with the use of so-called “dynamic equivalence” versions; but it is not so severely literal that ordinary readers will struggle to understand it. Its English recalls the classic diction of the KJV, and so it has some literary power (this is not unimportant in a Bible version). Its handling of the Old Testament is agreeable to conservative principles of interpretation. As a revision of the RSV, it is much better than the NRSV in several ways. However, there are some weaknesses in it. We have noticed the bad influence of the NIV in several places. So, for close study the ESV is less suitable than the NASB or NKJV. These latter versions, despite their difficulties and obscurities, continue to be the most useful for detailed and careful study.”

- Michael Marlowe

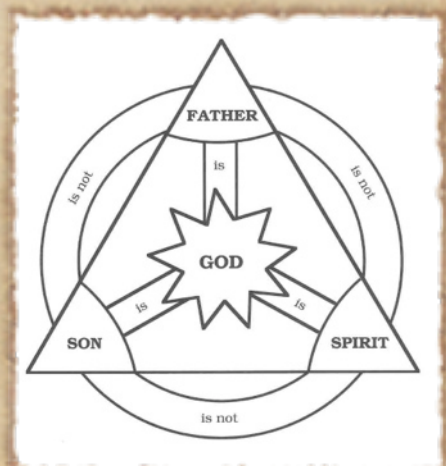


# Textual Comparisons:

## ESSENTIAL DOCTRINES OF THE FAITH



- ◆ Rev 1:8 (Lord GOD, \*GOD lacking in modern versions)
- ◆ Col 1:14 (“through His blood, cf. Eph 1:7)
- ◆ Rev 14:1 (KJV omits “and His name”)
- ◆ Luke 2:33a (Christ’s parentage - compare 2:41, 48 KJV)
- ◆ 1 Tim 3:16 (“God” was manifest, or “He who was manifest” in the flesh)
- ◆ Jude 4 (“God” is removed in the TR tradition)



- ◆ 1 John 5:7 “Comma Johanneum”
- ◆ Rom 8:16, 26; 1 Pet 1:11, John 1:32 (gender of the Holy Spirit, “it” or “he”?)
- ◆ Acts 4:25 (TR omits “through the Holy Spirit”, modern versions include it)
- ◆ Acts 16:7 (Spirit of “Jesus” omitted in TR)



# Textual Comparisons:

## ESSENTIAL DOCTRINES OF THE FAITH



- ◆ Isaiah 14:12 - “Lucifer or Day Star/Morning star?”
  - ◆ Lucifer does not reflect the original Hebrew, but was inserted by Jerome, reflecting a Latin word that was synonymous with Venus, or the day star (this can be found in the Latin poet Ovid, etc.)

## Concluding Thoughts

We can see from the diversity of mss. readings, that both the Textus Receptus and the modern Greek Text have readings which both support or detract from various doctrinal points. These are never malicious in nature, but always arise through natural, human causes (i.e., marginal notes, scribal errors, spelling mistakes, parallel influence, expansion of piety, etc.).

Due to the widespread dissemination of the text immediately following the spread of the gospel, and the parallel lines it took through the different regions, there could never have been any conspiracy to distort the Word of God in total - thank God, that He has preserved His Word so miraculously for us!



## King James Version Comprehension Quiz

### **Part 1 – Word Definitions**

*Circle (1) correct definition for the meaning of the following words:*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. <b>Conversation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. behaviour</li><li>b. the process of repentance</li><li>c. to talk with another person</li><li>d. dialogue or debate</li></ul>                             | 6. <b>Mammon</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. a pack animal used in the 1<sup>st</sup> century</li><li>b. a personification of wealth</li><li>c. the Aramaic word for grandmother</li><li>d. love of riches</li></ul>     |
| 2. <b>Reprobates</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. a person who receives a rebate</li><li>b. one who fails to pass a test</li><li>c. a Jewish sect</li><li>d. a heretic or back-slider</li></ul>               | 7. <b>Wist, Wot, Wit</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. to understand or know</li><li>b. the intellect or intelligence of a person</li><li>c. to feel slightly sad</li><li>d. an exclamation of surprise or anger</li></ul> |
| 3. <b>Dissimulation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. a rehearsed staging of an event</li><li>b. dissimilar</li><li>c. hypocrisy</li><li>d. an ointment used for medical purposes</li></ul>                    | 8. <b>Communicate</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. to join in a group with fellow believers</li><li>b. to express an idea or thought</li><li>c. to distribute or share something</li><li>d. none of the above</li></ul>   |
| 4. <b>Perdition</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. a creature living in Judea</li><li>b. utter destruction or ruin</li><li>c. a village near Jerusalem</li><li>d. the state of being lost</li></ul>             | 9. <b>Letteth</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. to allow or permit</li><li>b. a term used by tailors for stitching fabric</li><li>c. to restrain</li><li>d. to draw out</li></ul>  |
| 5. <b>Listeth</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. to sway or lean in one direction</li><li>b. to make a catalogue of items</li><li>c. choice or desire</li><li>d. to call out to someone at a distance</li></ul> | 10. <b>Curious</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. intricately designed</li><li>b. evil, wicked, or occult</li><li>c. to be inquisitive or interested in something</li><li>d. foolish</li></ul>                              |

### **Part 2 - Identification**

*Identify the correct meaning of the word or phrase that appears **in bold**.*

1. **Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance** (Matt. 3:8)
  - a. cultivate fruit that will help people repent
  - b. repent so that you can bear fruit in your life
  - c. show by your actions that you have repented
  - d. bring forth fruits so that you can meet repentance
2. Casting down **imagination**s (2 Cor. 10:5)
  - a. daydreams
  - b. fantasies
  - c. arguments
  - d. resistance
3. How long will ye love vanity, and seek after **leasing**? (Ps. 4:2)
  - a. making money from leasing
  - b. lying
  - c. releasing people from their obligations to God
  - d. treating others as of less value

## ◆ QUIZ RESULTS: AVERAGES

Part 1:

28.3%

Part 2:

27.5%